

Documents on Diplomacy: Resources

Section IX: World War II *Diplomatic Terms & Historical Events*

Diplomatic & Other Terms

Ambassador The official representative from one country to another. An Ambassador is the highest ranking official assigned to live in a foreign country for an extended period of time. In the United States, an Ambassador is appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. The title of Ambassador was first used in the United States in 1893. Prior to that, the highest ranking American diplomats were Ministers Plenipotentiary.

Arbitration The formal process of dispute settlement by referring the matter to mediator agreed to by the disagreeing parties.

Attaché A recognized, but not uniform, title for members of a diplomatic mission. They may be either junior members of the diplomatic corps or specialist staff from outside of the traditional diplomatic establishment who often report to their home agencies.

Belligerent States Nations which are in a recognized state of war.

Blockade An official action designed to prevent people or goods from moving from one place to another. A war measure that isolates some area of importance to the enemy.

Chargé d'Affaires The member of a diplomatic mission who takes charge of an embassy or legation during the temporary absence of its head. The chargé may also be the diplomat who acts as head of a country's lowest-level diplomatic mission that is neither an embassy nor a legation.

Charter The formal statement of an organized group that serves as its constitution or governing document.

Commission A group of representatives or diplomats who are given authority to accomplish a specific task.

Consul An official appointed by a government to protect its commercial interests and help its citizens in a foreign city.

Diplomacy The term is used to describe the practice of conducting relations with other nations, such as negotiating treaties, alliances, or agreements.

Diplomat An individual who is appointed by a government to represent its interests and to conduct its relations with another government. An Ambassador is the highest ranking U.S. Department of State diplomatic representative to another nation.

Diplomatic Corps Those engaged in on-going or specific official diplomatic efforts. Included are the Secretary of State, ambassadors, and special envoys to other nations and their staff members who support the work of diplomacy.

Diplomatic Mission An individual or group sent by a government to conduct negotiations or establish relations with another country. A diplomatic mission can be temporary or permanent.

Dispatches Official messages sent with speed between a government and its overseas diplomats or between nations.

Embargo An official ban by a government preventing trade with another country. An order of a state forbidding ships to enter or leave its ports.

Embassy The official headquarters of a government's Ambassador and other representatives to another country. It is usually located in the capitol of the other country. An Embassy is the highest level of diplomatic representation.

Envoy An agent sent by a government or ruler to transact diplomatic business.

Foreign Policy The official views and policies of a government regarding its relations with other nations. In the United States, foreign policy is developed by the President, with the advice of the Secretary of State and others, and is implemented by the Department of State and any other officials designated by the President.

Legation A diplomatic mission headed by a Minister whose title was "Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary." A legation is the second level of diplomatic representation and is less important than an embassy.

Minister Plenipotentiary A diplomat with the authority to represent a head of state but of a lower status than an Ambassador. Until 1893, diplomats who headed American missions overseas only carried the title of Minister Plenipotentiary. The complete title is "Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary."

Negotiate The term refers to discussions between individuals, groups, or nations that are conducted for the purpose of arriving at an agreement on a particular set of terms or actions.

Neutrality A legal status assumed unilaterally by a state during a time of war, indicating its intention to stay out of the war.

Protocol The system of rules and acceptable behavior used at official ceremonies and occasions. This may also refer to an official international agreement.

Ratify A state's formal act of consent to be bound by a treaty which it has already signed. In the United States, the Senate ratifies treaties negotiated by the Executive Branch.

Rebellion An attempt to remove a government or a leader by force.

Refugee A person who leaves his or her country to find safety, especially during war or for political or religious reasons.

Revolt An attempt to remove the government of a country by its some of its citizens, using force.

Sovereignty The authority of a state to govern itself.

Statesman An experienced politician, who is respected for making good decisions.

Treaty A formal agreement between two or more countries or states, as in reference to terms of peace or trade and any limitations associated within the agreement.

Trusteeship The idea that a territory should be administered for another state for an indefinite period of time until it is better able to govern itself.

Important Places, Concepts, and Events

Aggrandizement: An increase in power or position; a negative characterization.

Anglo-American: A phrase that refers to the relationship between the United States and Great Britain.

Armaments: Military weapons and/or explosives

Bretton Woods: A New Hampshire resort town, Bretton Woods was the site of the United Nations' Monetary and Financial Conference in 1944, which led to the establishment of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in 1945.

Canton: (Guangzhou) The largest city in southern China, Canton was China's only port open for trade with the West in the 18th and 19th centuries.

China Hands: The nickname of American diplomats of the early 20th century who were well-versed in Chinese politics. They were often born in China and fluent in Chinese.

Chinese Communist Party (CCP): Led by Mao Tse-tung, the Chinese communists waged a long civil war against Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government. During World War II, American observers were impressed by the communist forces opposing the Japanese invaders. In 1949, Mao ousted Chiang and ruled China until his death in 1976.

Chungking: (Chongqing) A major city of southwest China. Chungking was the headquarters of General Stillwell in World War II. It was bombed heavily by the Japanese.

Dixie Mission: The informal name for the "United States Army Observer Group," sent to Yanan to report on Mao Tse-tung's movement during World War II.

Dumbarton Oaks: An historic estate in Georgetown in Washington, D.C. It was the site of a 1944 conference that negotiated the charter of the future United Nations.

Formalities: Something that law or an official process says must be done.

Fulbright Resolution: A wartime resolution proposed in the House of Representatives by J. William Fulbright that encouraged the United States to participate in post-war international peacekeeping

organizations. After one term in the House, Fulbright was then elected to the U.S. Senate.

French Indochina: The area of French colonial control in southeast Asia, covering the territory of the modern states of Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos.

General Assembly of the United Nations: One of the five main organizational components of the United Nations. It is the only one in which all members have an equal vote.

Guerrilla Warfare: An irregular form of war during which small groups use military tactics and methods to attack a larger, less-mobile force. "Guerrilla" is Spanish means "little war."

Infamy: When someone or something is notorious for being bad or shocking.

International Monetary Fund: Created in 1945, the goal of the IMF is to stabilize exchange rates and help member countries meet balance of payments needs. The IMF currently has 187 member states.

Joint Resolution of Congress: A legislative measure approved by both the Senate and the House of Representatives presented to the President for approval. There is no difference between a resolution and a bill.

Kuomintang: The name in Chinese of the Nationalist Party, led by Chiang Kai-shek

Lend Lease: The program by which the United States supplied materials to Allied nations during World War II from 1941 (prior to U.S. entry into the war) to 1945. Recipients included Britain, France, China and the Soviet Union.

Manchuria: A region of northeast China occupied by the Japanese during the 1930s.

Nanking: (Nanjing) One of China's four ancient capitals, Nanking was the seat of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Government before he fled to Taiwan. Japan occupied Nanking in December 1937 and massacred an estimated 300,000-350,000 Chinese citizens.

Security Council of the United Nations: One of the main components of the United Nations charged with maintaining international peace and security. There are five permanent members with veto power and 10 rotating members who serve two-year terms.

Subjugate: To defeat a people or country and then rule them in such a way that gives them no freedom.

Taiwan: An island located off the southwest coast of China and formerly known as Formosa. Chiang Kai-shek moved his Nationalist government here in 1949.

Three Great Allies: A phrase referring to the Allies attending the Cairo Conference during World War II—Britain, the United States, and China.

Tyranny: A government that exercises power without any controls or limits.

Vichy Government: The government of France that collaborated with the Nazis during the German occupation of France from July 1940 to August 1944.

World Bank: An international financial institution created by the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944. It provides loans to developing countries for capital improvements.

WHO: The World Health Organization is one of the specialized agencies of the United Nations with responsibility for international public health. It was established in 1948.

Yenan: (Yan'an) Yenan was the headquarters of the Chinese Communist movement from 1936 to 1945.